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ABSTRACT

Although handwriting should not be formally taught in the preschool years, teachers can help children develop visual motor integration and other related skills required for writing. The activities suggested in this manual, while neither new nor different, are presented in a simple step-by-step form designed to facilitate success. Exercises focus on (1) crossing the midline, (2) development of the pincer grasp, (3) development of hand coordination, (4) development of finger dexterity, (5) hand preference, (6) development of eye-hand coordination, (7) development of visual tracking skills, (8) development of visual perception skills, (9) managing scissors, (10) using writing tools, (11) sequential marking activities for horizontal and vertical lines, (12) sequential activities for making circular strokes, (13) sequential activities for making slant lines, (14) printing an initial, (15) special helpful hints for the handicapped. Reference materials to help teachers generate more ideas are also provided. (RH)

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GETTING A HEAD START ON PREWRITING SKILLS

by

Marge Armfield
with Kathie Lee

PS 013939

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GETTING A HEAD START

ON

PREWRITING SKILLS

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The work herein was written expressly for the Head Start programs in Nebraska pursuant to Grant #85-320-123-01 from the Office of Child Development, Region VII, Department of Health Education and Welfare. It does not necessarily reflect O.C.D. position or policy. Official O.C.D. endorsement should not be inferred.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

Crossing the Mid-Line. 2

Development of the Pincer Grasp. 5

Development of Hand Coordination 8

Development of Finger Dexterity. 10

Hand Preference. 20

Development of Eye-Hand Coordination 22

Development of Visual Tracking Skills. 25

Development of Visual Perception Skills. 27

Managing Scissors. 46

Using Writing Tools. 48

Sequential Marking Activities for Horizontal and Vertical Lines. 50

Sequential Activities for Making Circular Strokes. 52

Sequential Activities for Making Slant Lines 53

Printing An Initial. 55

Special Helpful Hints for the Handicapped. 58

Reference Materials for More Ideas 59

INTRODUCTION

Preschool teachers desire to give the children in their classrooms the best possible experiences in readiness activities and prewriting skills are among their concerns. Certain skills can be developed that will prepare the preschool youngsters for entry into regular school activities with little or no difficulty.

There should be no formal teaching of handwriting in the preschool years, just as there should be no formal teaching of handwriting in kindergarten. However, teachers can help children develop visual motor integration and other related skills required for writing. The methods suggested in this manual, while neither new nor different, are presented in a simple step-by-step form so that both teachers and children will have a good chance for success.

During the first week of the year, have the child draw a picture of himself and the house in which he lives. Save this picture with the child's name and date recorded on it by placing it in the child's file. Within the last four weeks of the school year, have the child draw a second picture of himself and his home. Compare the two pictures. The change you see will be a good indicator of the progress that has been made in visual motor coordination and fine motor skills.

CROSSING THE MID-LINE

One of the first developmental milestones a child development specialist looks for when studying a child, is his ability to cross the mid-line. Early in life, a baby will reach for a rattle toward his right side with his right hand but will use his left hand if the rattle is toward his left. At approximately six months of age, most babies have acquired the ability to reach across their bodies to pick up an object on the left with the right hand and vice versa. A child who can cross the mid-line will be able to use both hands together in playing with toys.

The acquisition of this skill is an important prerequisite skill for writing. Occasionally, a preschool child comes along who, for any one of a number of reasons, has not developed this skill automatically. He will need special attention. Because of this, all preschool children should be observed in situations requiring them to cross the mid-line.

One simple, yet effective method of screening children for crossing the mid-line is to place a row of toys in front of the child and ask him to pick them up, one at a time using only one hand. A child who cannot cross the mid-line will rotate his body in order to reach the toys at the far end of the line. The child with normal responses will reach across his body to grasp the toy at the opposite end of the table.

Another effective method of determining ability to cross the mid-line is to request the child draw a horizontal line on a chalkboard from one side to another without rotating his feet. If the child cannot draw a continuous line, he is likely to have difficulty with other activities that require movement from one side of the body to the other.

The implications of inability to cross the mid-line in later learning tasks are varied and multiple. Any activity that requires the use of both hands together can be affected such as tying shoes, moving a crayon or pencil across a paper, putting all the pieces in a puzzle, and matching block patterns. Inability to cross the mid-line may suggest poor integration between cerebral hemispheres.

Projects that are beneficial for a child who has problems crossing the mid-line include any activity, game or toy that requires the use of both hands and both sides of the body.

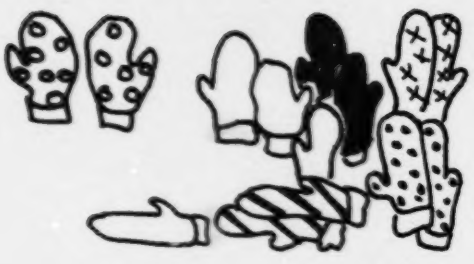
ACTIVITIES:

- Drawing a long, horizontal line across the chalkboard without turning the body.
- Pouring water from one container to another.
- Rotating arms in wide circles in front of body.

GAMES:

Simon Says

- Play Simon Says with the children with an emphasis on activities that involve crossing the mid-line, such as: place right hand on left elbow, touch right ear with left hand, and touch left foot with right hand.



Mitten Game:

- Use eight pairs of construction paper mittens in eight basic colors and tape them to the wall. Ask each child in turn to place his hands on the red mittens. He must put his right hand on a right hand mitten and his left hand on a left hand mitten. Have each child find several colors of mittens. Rearrange the mittens by placing them in random fashion so that the child must cross his arms to correctly place his hands on a pair.

Catch the Cat:

- Draw a cat on the chalkboard.
- Paste a picture of a dog on an eraser.
- Have the child face the board with the cat to his left side. Place the eraser in his right hand and have him erase the cat in a broad sweeping motion.
- Reverse the procedure with the cat to the right side of the child.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PINCER GRASP

The ability to grasp, hold and release objects between the thumb and forefinger follows sequential development patterns that can be observed from birth onward through the preschool years. Very early in life, a child will display the reflexive ability to retain an object in a fist-like grasp. It should be noted that the thumb is not involved in this grasping motion. As the child is given the opportunity to hold toys that attract his attention, his grasp grows stronger and more agile during this first half year of life.

Between seven and eight months, the thumb will begin to adduct, a rather one-sided movement, when holding an object. This is known as the inferior scissors grasp and with the acquisition of this movement, rattles and rings are important toys.

The child will develop the ability to move the thumb in opposition to the fingers in a pincer grasp at about nine months. With more maturation, the fingers develop enough strength to exert pressure on objects and small toys, and pliable materials can be handled.

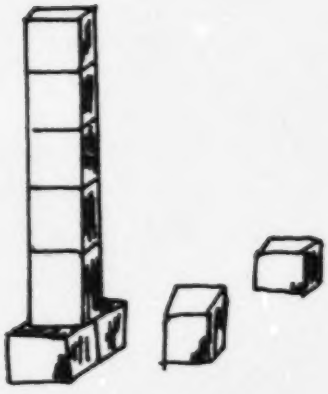
Further refinement of the pincer grasp takes place during the first year and the child will acquire the ability to voluntarily release objects. He also will begin to point and poke with his index finger, again widening the range of toys he can manage.

A strong pincer grasp is necessary for preschool children to acquire good fine motor skills. The ability to hold crayons, paint brushes and other marking tools depend on this grasping motion. Cutting with scissors, turning pages of a book and picking up small objects are all dependent on the pincer grasp.

These activities and crafts will help develop a strong pincer grasp:

SORTING OBJECTS

Large and small buttons, dry beans, or beads can be objects used for sorting. Two containers should be provided so that the children can place large objects in one and small objects in the second container.

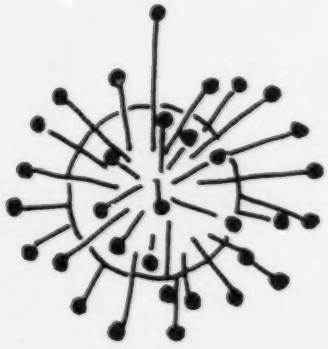


BLOCK TOWERS

One-inch cube blocks, pieces of scrap lumber, or alphabet blocks can be used for building towers. Encourage children to build towers as high as possible and allow them to knock them down when they wish.

HOLIDAY ORNAMENTS

Ornaments for hanging on trees, in windows or around the room are made by attaching beads to styrofoam balls with straight pins. These can be taken apart, stored and re-made the following year.



PAPER PUNCH

Punching holes in paper requires strong hand muscles and good pincer control. Picking up the small punched out pieces increases finger dexterity. Punched out white pieces can be pasted over colored construction paper for attractive decorations for holiday seasons.

SPINNING OBJECTS

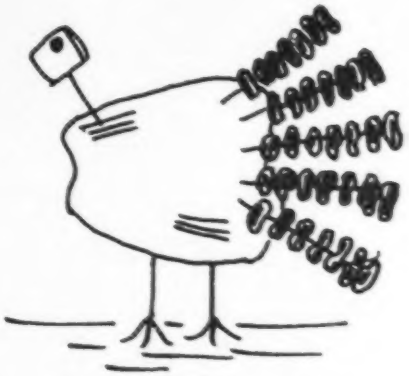
Small tops, jacks or other objects that will spin give the child an opportunity to grasp and use a snapping action with thumb and fingers to provide fun and develop fine motor skills.

POMANDER BALLS

Gifts can be made for mothers by sticking cloves into oranges. This activity requires a pincer movement strong enough to hold a small object while it is being pushed into the orange.

THANKSGIVING TURKEY

An apple base with a tail made of toothpicks with raisins threaded on them, an attached marshmallow for a head with cloves stuck in for eyes, makes a Thanksgiving turkey that can be used as a table decoration.



COLOR CAN CLOTHESPIN GAME

Provide the children with strips of construction paper in primary colors to be pasted lengthwise on coffee cans. Paint snap-type clothespins to match the construction paper colors. The cans and clothespins provide color matching and color naming activities.

DEVELOPMENT OF HAND COORDINATION

Hand coordination involves the ability to integrate the two sides of the body and to use both hands together. There are few activities that do not require some degree of coordination between the left and right hands.

Integration between the two hands develops at a rapid rate during the preschool years. At the end of the first year, a child begins two-hand manipulation of toys and in another three months, he is able to hold an object in one hand and manipulate it with the other. This manipulation opens a new world of activity for a child and more complicated toys can be enjoyed.

In the overall development of a child, the acquisition of good motor skills and hand coordination may reflect underlying neurological maturation and is a good indicator of such. Occasionally a preschool child is observed using one hand in the manipulation of an object while the other hand mirrors the motions involved. This can be an indicator of some further problem in the area of motor skills and the aid of an occupational therapist should be enlisted.

Certain activities that develop hand coordination in the preschool setting include:

ACTIVITIES:

- buttoning large buttons; decreasing the size of the buttons as skill improves
- sewing and lacing cards
- folding napkins, towels
- pouring water from one pitcher to another

GAMES:

Dippy Do

- Place two containers containing many small objects, such as wooden beads, cubes and buttons in front of the child. Place two other containers behind them. Ask the child to reach for one object in each of the front containers, pick them up and place them in the rear containers with both hands working simultaneously.
- Variation:
  Background rhythm can be supplied such as a slowly ticking metronome or slowly beaten rhythm sticks.

DENTAL FLOSSING

Dentists are stressing the importance of flossing as an important factor in reducing and preventing tooth decay. Preschool children find flossing their teeth is fun and it is a great hand coordination activity. The correct use of dental floss can be taught in the classroom as part of the preschool dental health program. To introduce the task, demonstrate carefully how to hold the floss. Check each child to make sure he understands how to do this and correct any errors before permitting the children to begin the actual process. Coordination of movement of both hands is necessary, therefore, children who have difficulty with fine motor integration will benefit from this activity.

DEVELOPMENT OF FINGER DEXTERITY

As the child learns to manipulate toys and other objects and he is able to coordinate the use of his hands, he develops strength in his fingers and becomes more agile. The gaining of finger strength and dexterity is especially noticed in the index finger and in the pincer movement of the index finger and thumb.

Dexterity is noticed as the small child begins to turn the pages of a book and pick up objects and drop them into containers. Strength is observed when the child grasps a crayon firmly and makes vertical and horizontal lines. The combination of these two aspects of fine motor skills can be enhanced by a preschool program that offers opportunities for these developments.

Some activities that children can engage in need little or no additional equipment, just a little imagination.

FINGER DEXTERITY EXERCISES:

Have each child clasp his hands with the fingers of the right hand alternating with the fingers of the left hand. Then change positions to clasp hands left to right. This increases strength and flexibility.

Cross the middle finger over the index finger and reverse the process.

Place palm of the right hand on the table and press down. Tap the index finger up and down several times. Tap middle, ring and little fingers in the same manner. Repeat with left hand. Later do both hands at once. This can be done in time to music.

The following activities utilize simple equipment:

CRUMPLING NEWSPAPER

Place a half sheet of newspaper in front of a child seated at a table. Hold one hand in lap. With the other hand, crumple the sheet of newspaper into a small ball. Children should not use their bodies for help. Encourage the children to try to make the crumpled newspaper small enough to disappear.

FINGER PAINTS

FINGER PAINTS	
COMBINE	1/2 C. cornstarch 3/4 C. cold water
DISSOLVE	1 envelope unflavored gelatin in 1/4 C. cold water
STIR	2 C. hot water in cornstarch mixture
COOK	Over medium heat until clear Remove from heat
STIR	in dissolved gelatin
STIR	in 1/2 C. soap flakes or detergent; divide and add colors

Have the children use the paints on newspaper, brown wrapping paper, shelf paper or any other paper readily available. Demonstrate how to use the hands and fingers to smear paint on the paper. Encourage experimentation with different ways of making patterns with the paint. When the children have finished painting, write their names on the pictures and display in the room.

SQUEEZE PAINTING

Mix poster paint to the consistency of prepared mustard, using starch as a thickener, if necessary. Pour the paint into detergent bottles, making sure the bottle cap does not have a hole so large that it will let the paint run out without squeezing the bottle.

Provide the children with any paper that is suitable for finger painting. Have them hold the squeeze bottle over the paper and squirt out the paint. Form designs on the paper as the paint is squeezed out. The resulting pictures are very interesting and make colorful displays.

GLUE PAINTING

Provide the children with white glue in a squeeze bottle and colored construction paper. Have them squeeze the glue container and swirl the glue onto the paper. When the glue design is completed, sprinkle salt, sand or glitter on the paper. Shake the excess back off the paper. Hang the pictures to dry and display.

STRING PAINTING

Provide the children with construction paper that has been creased so it can be readily folded in half. Dip some string in poster paint and loop the string around on one half of the paper. Fold the other half of the paper over the string. Press down and pull out the string. Open the paper and the result will be an interesting free form design.

SIDEWALK PAINTING

Children can add food coloring to water in small pails. Provide each child with a paintbrush and have them make designs on the sidewalk. These designs can be left for the rain to wash away or they can be hosed off. Clear water can be used for painting the side of the building.

PASTING

Children enjoy helping make paste for pasting projects. Hint: Boiled paste lasts longer and sticks better than non-cooked paste.

PASTE	
MIX	1/2 C. flour
ADD	and stir in enough cold water to make the mixture thick as cream
COOK	and stir five minutes
STORE	in refrigerator, in air-tight jar
OPTIONAL	add a few drops of wintergreen for a pleasant smell add a few drops food coloring

PLAY DOUGH

PLAY DOUGH	
MIX	2 C. flour
	1 C. salt
	2 T. oil
	several drops food coloring
	enough water to make a soft dough
STORE	in a covered container

Homemade play dough is easy and inexpensive to make and children enjoy using it. Children can make cookies, bugs, tables, chairs or any creative object.

CERAMIC CLAY

Ceramic clay that becomes rock hard can be used for making gifts for Christmas, Mother's Day and other occasions. Candle holders, napkin rings, paper weights, plaques and artificial fruit are a few items that can be made. Molded objects can be painted when the clay has hardened.

CERAMIC CLAY	
BRING TO BOIL	2 C. salt
	2/3 C. cold water
MIX	1 C. cornstarch
	1/2 C. cold water
Stir into salt mixture and remove from heat immediately. It will thicken at once. (If not, place over heat and stir one minute.) Leave mixture white or divide and knead in food coloring. Store in plastic bags for indefinite length of time; no refrigeration needed. It can be molded into any form and will dry bone-hard in 36 hours.	

MOSAIC PICTURES

Grasping small objects, applying paste and sticking them down develop fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination. Very common materials can be used for pasting activities. These include:

- macaroni
- felt scraps
- popcorn
- yarn
- pumpkin seeds
- cereal
- toothpicks
- broken egg shells
- beans
- nut shells
- dried flowers
- watermelon seeds
- rice
- drinking straws

SNOW PICTURES can be made by providing the children with cotton balls cut into four to six pieces and a sheet of blue construction paper. Paste cotton pieces representing snow and snow flakes on the paper.

FINGER PUPPETS

Finger puppets offer an opportunity to practice dexterity while being creative. To make finger puppets, cut the fingers from old gloves and decorate the fingers with felt tipped pens or fabric glued to them. Other puppets can be made from construction paper.

Nursery rhymes and stories such as Jack and Jill and Mary Had a Little Lamb and Peter Rabbit can be dramatized.

PAPER CHAINS

Provide the children with strips of construction paper, 1/2"x8", using bright colors. Make a circle of the first paper strip, glueing ends together. Loop the second strip through the first circle, continuing until the strip is as long as desired. These paper chains make nice tree decorations.

TOOTHPICK STARS

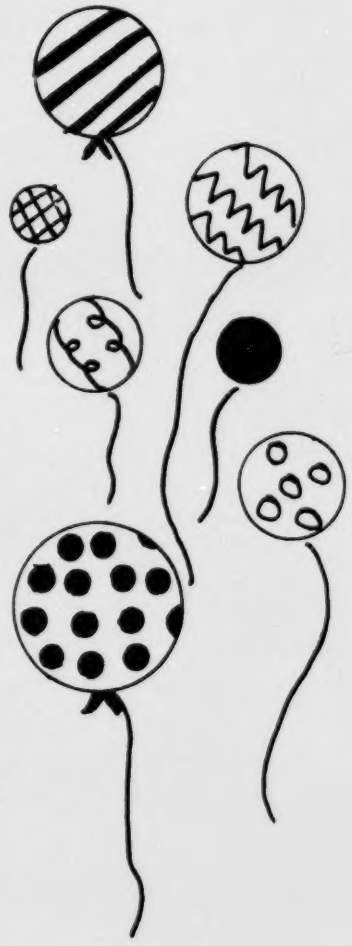
Dip toothpicks in white glue and roll in glitter. Insert the toothpicks at all angles in a small styrofoam ball. Hang the stars around the room or on a Christmas tree.

WIRE SCULPTURE

Collect short ends of colorful telephone or electric wire and bend it into creative free-standing wire sculpture that can be displayed. Because the wire is very pliable, interesting shapes and forms can be easily created.

BALLOON DECORATIONS

Blow up small to medium sized balloons. Cut strips of paper 2" x 12". Provide each child with a balloon, strips of paper and liquid starch in a dish. Dip the paper strips in liquid starch and wind the strips on the balloon. Cover the balloon with 3 or 4 layers of paper. Let the material dry. When the balloons are dry, they can be spray painted or painted with poster paints. The resulting colorful balls make good room decorations during the holiday season.



Variation: A similar ball can be made by winding yarn dipped in starch around a balloon. When it dries, pop the balloon and remove it. You have an airy, round sculpture.

COOKING

Because the activities involved in cooking require the use of small motor muscles, children will benefit from mixing, pouring, and baking food.

PEANUT BUTTER COOKIES

Give the children equal amounts of:
- PEANUT BUTTER
- POWDERED MILK
- HONEY

Mix the ingredients together and mold the dough into cookies.

PEANUT BUTTER BALLS

COMBINE
- 2 C. snipped shredded coconut
- 1/2 C. peanut butter
- 4 t. vanilla extract

MIX WELL

Shape into balls and place on waxed paper. Refrigerate until firm.

CHOCOLATE ANIMAL CRACKERS

MELT 1 T. shortening
1 pkg. chocolate chips

in a saucepan. Stir smooth. Dip animal crackers into chocolate and lift out with a fork. Place on waxed paper to harden.

Snacks the children can make:

- Spread peanut butter on wedges of apples and have APPLEWICHES. Very nutritious!!

- Press a pretzel stick into a cube of cheese.
- Fill the center of a celery stick with peanut butter.
- Provide peanuts in the shell for children and have them remove the nuts.

- Spear pineapple chunks and grapes with toothpicks for a fruit plate.

DRESSING

In colder climates, children have ample opportunity to learn to put on mittens and gloves. Often it is easier and quicker for the preschool staff to put on mittens and gloves for the child than to wait for him to do it; however, this is not aiding the child in becoming independent. Encourage the children to put on mittens and gloves without aid. Remember this is a learning experience, too.

Buttons and zippers can be manipulated by the children if the buttons are large enough in size and if the zippers are accessible. If children have difficulty with clothing closures, provide them with a button or zipper board for practice.

Gloves can be made available in the dress-up area. Placing fingers in their proper places can be difficult for some children and practice in this skill will benefit them.

HAND PREFERENCE

Hand preference may be noticed as early as eighteen months; however, it is not fully developed until five or six years of age. Many psychologists like to see children consistently using one hand in preference to the other by the age of four. As hand preference is established, strength in the dominant hand is acquired. The subordinate hand plays the important supportive role and assists in the accomplishment of tasks.

If there seems to be a question as to the child's dominant hand, observe the child carefully in the classroom setting. While observing, record the number of times each hand is used. From this record, it can be determined which hand is preferred and that will be the hand to which objects are offered in the future.

Sample activities to be observed and charted:

ACTIVITY	RIGHT HAND	LEFT HAND
Turning knobs on toys		
Eating with fork or spoon		
Opening doors		
Hammering nails or pegs		
Picking up toys		
Bouncing a ball		
Receiving objects from another person		
Screwing on jar lids		
Stringing beads		
Winding yarn		
Energetic reaching - up high		

After observing spontaneous activities, additional testing for handedness may be administered by offering the child an object squarely in front of him and letting him choose which hand he will use.

WORKING WITH A LEFT-HANDED CHILD

Working with children who prefer to use their left hand will pose little, if any, problems in the classroom. Left-handed children develop skills as easily as right-handed children although they may require a bit more individualized attention from the teacher in certain areas such as handling scissors.

Points to remember include:

- Seat the children so the left-handed child avoids bumping elbows with right handed neighbors.
- Discourage hooking the left hand by making sure the paper is tilted to the right, not the left. This is in the opposite direction of that of the right-handed child, but is necessary in order that the child have good vision of his work.
- Left-handed primary scissors are available from school supply companies. Order a pair for the left-handed child.

AMBIDEXTROUS CHILDREN

The ambidextrous child has the ability to use either hand equally well in accomplishing tasks. When an ambidextrous child uses either hand, neither hand may receive sufficient practice for the child to develop proficiency. Encouragement should be given in the use of one hand or the other for each task.

DEVELOPMENT OF EYE-HAND COORDINATION

Eye-hand coordination is the ability to organize the hand movements with the vision in order to perform tasks smoothly. The eye guides the hand as it manipulates objects and directs the patterns of movement.

The development of the use of small muscles in the hands and the development of visual skills in directing the movements of the fine motor skills are closely co-related in the overall growth of children. Because of this, it becomes necessary for individuals working with preschool children to not only observe hand movements but eye movements as well. Lack of visual attention to a task and poor eye movements can account for faulty performance where fine motor skills are required.

To aid in the acquisition of good eye-hand coordination skills, the teacher should help the child in his first attempts at tasks that require fine motor skills. A child lacking in adequate eye-hand coordination will find bead stringing, lacing, puzzles and manipulative boards difficult tasks. The child is more likely to respond to the use of colorful objects with a variety of shapes and sizes that attract the eye. Objects that offer a diversity of tactile stimulation will also encourage visual attention.

MANIPULATIVE BOARDS

Commercial or home-made button, zipper and buckle boards that offer the child an opportunity to button and unbutton, zip up and down, and buckle and unbuckle will increase manual dexterity and provide practice in handling closures that must be mastered to easily dress and undress with independence.

Gadget boards that have locks, catches, bolts, screws, hooks, telephone dials and other common hardware used in daily living will prove entertaining and beneficial. Use of these materials will increase finger and hand strength in addition to motor control.

STRINGING BEADS

Use a commercial bead stringing kit, empty spools, macaroni, rigatoni, or cereal (Cheerios, Fruit Loops) for stringing. A long, stiff tip is necessary on the string and can be made by dipping the end into glue and allowing it to dry. The tip should be at least as long as the longest bead. Cereal may be made into necklaces and worn home.

PUZZLES

The first puzzle that children should be introduced to is a simple form board with geometric shaped inserts. These are the most basic types and children will experience success with them more readily than with other kinds. From the geometric form boards and three- or four-piece puzzles, a child can move on to more irregular shapes and forms. Puzzles that cannot be worked are frustrating for a child and will quickly eliminate any desire he has to make further attempts. Simple two, three and four piece puzzles can be made by cutting front panels of cereal boxes into pieces.

SEWING CARDS

Sewing cards can provide fun as well as good eye-hand coordination exercises. Paper plates can be used by punching holes around the rim for lacing. Stiff, heavy paper inserts in hosiery, backs of cereal boxes, or tablet backs are a few items found in homes that can be adapted for sewing. Certain heavy-weight Christmas or greeting cards are also adaptable along with styrofoam or heavy paper meat trays, and parts of old plastic bottles that have been cut out and punched with an ice pick or paper punch. The ends of the yarn or string used should be dipped in white glue to provide a firm tip for sewing.

PEG BOARDS

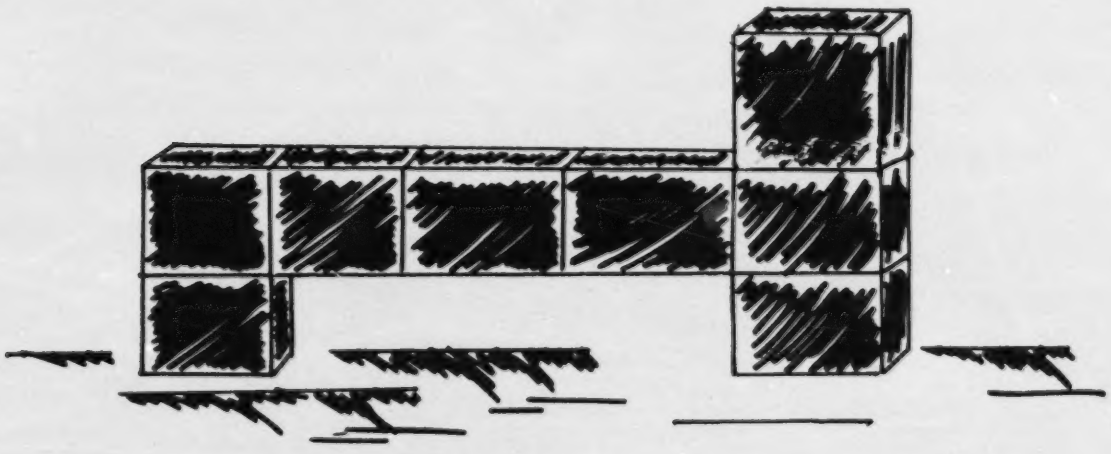
Commercial peg boards are available in several sizes. Large pegs and boards with only a few holes are easier for children with poor eye hand coordination to master.

PASTE-UP PICTURES

Pasting a few cut-out objects such as people, animals or cars on a piece of construction paper to form a picture is an enjoyable and rewarding activity. Greeting cards could be made for holidays, Mother's Day, and birthdays.

BLOCK BUILDING

The use of block building to encourage eye-hand coordination can include the making of towers, roads, tall buildings, bridges and tunnels. Encouragement on the part of the teacher to build more complex arrangements will develop muscle control and visual perception.



DEVELOPMENT OF VISUAL TRACKING SKILLS

Visual tracking is the ability to focus the eyes on a moving object or to follow along a stationary path. Visual tracking skills are acquired simultaneously with fine motor development; however, there may be a lag in one of the skills and the need for remedial activities will be necessary. Children who display a lag in visual tracking will be observed to have inconsistent eye movements as they visually trace a path drawn across a page or they will not be able to visually follow a moving object as it passes in their field of vision. The object that should be the center of focus is elusive, motion is confusing and there is an unsteady response to a regular, consistent, drawn pathway.

Eye tracking skills that require a left and right progression across the page must be learned; they are not natural movements. In our culture, we scan printed material from left to right, yet this is not true worldwide. Oriental children learn to scan up and down while other cultures scan from right to left. Our children look at materials in a left to right progression only after they have been taught to do so. This developmental skill is acquired during preschool years and it is the responsibility of preschool teachers to provide opportunities for children to learn the skill.

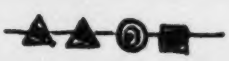
EYE TRACKING ACTIVITIES:

Flashlight Games:

Move a lighted flashlight slowly and have the children visually follow the beam of light.

Bead Patterns:

Provide bead patterns such as two red beads, one blue and one green for the children to follow when stringing beads. Short, simple patterns are best used in the beginning attempts to copy patterns.



Eye Exercises:

Have the child stretch both arms out in front of his body with his hands about two feet apart. Do not move the head. Move the eyes from the left fingers to the right fingers. Repeat several times.

Swinging Buttons:

Fasten a large button on a piece of string. Swing it slowly from left to right. Encourage the children to track the button with their eyes.

DEVELOPMENT OF VISUAL PERCEPTION SKILLS

The maximum perceptual development occurs between the ages of three and a half to seven and a half years. Adequate visual perceptual skill is the ability to recognize important stimuli in the environment and to process this stimuli in order to make appropriate responses. Visual perception is involved in nearly every movement we make. If distortion of the environment is experienced by a child due to poor visual perception, intervention will become necessary and remedial activities employed.

Visual perception has a profound effect on the accuracy of fine motor skills. The child who can easily distinguish differences in the formation of shapes, find the central focal point in a picture that has several objects, perceive rotation of drawings, and discriminate size, direction and position, is likely to have little trouble with the accuracy of his fine motor movements. Those children who cannot will also display problems in coloring, copying and drawing. A few activities for children who need help in the area of development of visual perception skills will probably not be adequate. Many activities will be needed and what may be thought to be over-teaching will be required. Success by a child in a single attempt will not assure success at a later date.

VISUAL PERCEPTION ACTIVITIES:

- Large and Small Discrimination:
  1. Present objects of various sizes beginning with two and have the child pick out the smaller.
  2. Have the child arrange wooden blocks by size on shelves. Indicate which blocks are larger.
  3. Give the child several strips of heavy paper in graduated lengths. Ask him to arrange them in a row from longest to shortest.

- Shape and Figure Discrimination:
  1. Match circles cut from construction paper to other circles, squares to squares, and triangles to triangles.
  2. Place round and square shapes in a box and ask the child to pick out the round shapes.
  3. Provide parquetry blocks and ask the children to sort them into separate piles according to shape.
  4. Provide figure or shape dominoes and have the children match them according to figures or shapes. Matching according to color will also reinforce discrimination skills.

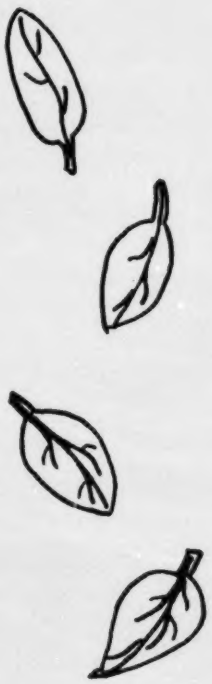
FINGER PLAYS

Finger plays not only develop manual dexterity but they enhance body awareness and develop visual perception. They improve the child's language and listening skills, increase attention span and may be used to teach the child to follow directions, sequence and count. The best finger plays use both large and small muscles for a more total participation.

To introduce a new finger play:

1. Have the children listen and watch the words and actions as they are demonstrated.
2. Repeat, having the children imitate the action only.
3. Repeat again, having the children imitate the action and say the words softly.
4. Do the finger play often to prevent forgetting the words and actions.

FALLING LEAVES



All the leaves are falling down,
(Hands in air, wiggle fingers as hands go down)

Fall leaves, fall,
(Continue action)

Leaves are red and yellow and brown,
(Draw an imaginary leaf in the air with index finger)

Fall leaves, fall,
(Repeat first action)

Whirling, whirling all around
(Whirling motion)

Whirling, whirling to the ground
(Whirling motion)

All the leaves are coming down
(Whirling motion)

Fall leaves, fall.
(Repeat first action)

TWO LITTLE BIRDS

Two little birds sitting on a hill,
(Close fists, extend thumbs)

One named Jack and the other named Jill.
(Talk to each thumb)

Fly away Jack; fly away Jill.
(Toss thumbs over shoulder separately)

Come back Jack; come back Jill.
(Bring back fists separately with thumbs extended)

IN THE FALL

I'm a big tall tree,
(Raise arms overhead)

The wind blows me,
(Sway back and forth)

I'm a bird so gay,
(Lower arms to shoulder)

I fly south this way.
(Flap fingers like wings)

I'm a butterfly,
(Put thumbs together)

And I fly this way.
(Flap fingers like wings)

I'm a mum so gay.
(Point to self)

I nod this way.
(Nod head)

TEN LITTLE FRIENDS

Two little houses across the street.
(Hold hands, fists closed)

Open the doors and ten friends meet.
(Open fingers)

How do you do, and how do you do.
(Fingers bow to each other)

Such nice sunny weather
(Bring fingers back up)

Off they hurried to school
(Move fingers in a hurrying motion)

Ten little friends together.

FRIENDLY FINGERS

Wiggle your fingers.

Waggle your fingers.
(Wiggle your fingers)

Shake your fingers.
(Shake your fingers)

Stretch them out and touch a friend
(Stretch out hands)

And he'll be glad, I know.
(Clap hands)

RIGHT HAND, LEFT HAND

This is my right hand;
I'll raise it up high.

This is my left hand;
I'll touch the sky.

Right hand, left hand,
Roll them around.

Left hand, right hand,
Pound, pound, pound.

FIVE LITTLE SQUIRRELS

One, two, three, four, five,
(Count fingers)

Five little squirrels sitting in a tree;

Said this little squirrel, "What do I see?"
(Point to each finger in turn)

Said this little squirrel, "I see a gun!"

Said this little squirrel, "Oh, let's run!"

Said this little squirrel, "I'm not afraid."

Said this little squirrel, "Let's sit in the shade."

Bang! went the gun, and they all ran away.
(Clap hand slowly and hide behind back)

(NOTE: If appropriate with the children's level, the teacher may want to discuss how guns hurt animals and use this as an introduction to a lesson on safety)

TWO LITTLE HOUSES

Two little houses all closed up tight,
(Fists closed, thumbs inside)

Open up the windows and let in the light.
(Finger and thumbs stretched out)

Ten little finger people tall and straight,
(Palms away from body, fingers erect)

Ready for school at half past eight.
(Fingers erect, hands and arms move jerkily forward)

BEDTIME

This is the boy all dressed for bed,
(Hold up index finger, right hand)

This is the pillow for his head,
(Left hand outstretched, palm up)

These are the covers, wrapped 'round him tight,
(Index finger, right hand, placed on palm of left hand. Close fingers of left hand over index finger)

Here is the boy asleep for the night.
(Display index finger enclosed in left hand)

HOMES

Here's a nest for Robin Red-breast
(Cup hands together)

Here's a hive for Busy Bee
(Fold fists, press together, thumbs opening a hole)

Here's a hole for Jack Rabbit
(Cup hands, thumbs and fingers shaping hole)

And a house for me!
(Form roof over head)

POSTMAN

This is the way the postman comes walking down the street,
(Fingers -- walking motion)

Left-Right and Left-Right
(Stomp left foot -- then right foot)

I can hear his feet.
(Hands at ear listening)

He sometimes smiles and waves at me:
(Smile and wave)

I clap my hands in glee.
(Clap hands)

For this is the way he lets me know
(Point to self)

He has a letter for me.
(Wave letter)

TOYS FOR BABY

Here's a ball for baby,
Big and soft and round.
(Make a ball with thumbs and forefingers)

Here is baby's hammer,
See how it can pound.
(Make hammer with fist. Pound in other hand)

Here is baby's music,
Clapping, clapping so.
(Hold fingers up facing each other, clap)

Here are baby's soldiers,
Standing in a row.
(Hold fingers up straight)

Here is baby's trumpet,
Toot-to-toot-to-too.
(Pretend to blow with fists before mouth)

Here's the way that baby,
Plays at peek-a-boo.
(Play peek-a-boo with fingers)

Here's a big umbrella,
To keep the baby dry.
(Cup hand and put fingers under for handle)

Here is baby's cradle,
Rock-a-baby-bye.
(Make cradle of arms)

ROLL AND CLAP

Roll your hands, roll your hands,
As fast, as fast, as fast can be.
Then fold your arms like me.

Clap your hands, clap your hands,
As loudly, as loudly, as loud can be.
Then fold your arms like me.

OPEN, SHUT THEM

Open, shut them.
Open, shut them.
Give your hands a clap.

Open, shut them.
Open, shut them.
Fold them in your lap.

Creep them, creep them,
Creep them, creep them,
Up your little chin.
Open wide your little mouth,
But do not let them in.

THREE GHOSTS

One, two, three white ghosts
(Hold up fingers one by one)

Walking out on Halloween night,
(Walk fingers across top of desk)

One, two, three white ghosts
(Hold up fingers one by one)

Give us all a terrible fright!
(Hide face behind hands)

BLACK CATS

Five big, black cats
(Hold up five fingers)

On a witch's broom,
(Hands clasped together in front as if holding a broom)

Five big, black cats
(Hold up fingers)

Fly across the moon.
(Sweeping motion with right hand)

FIVE LITTLE WITCHES

Five little witches on Halloween night
(Hold up five fingers)

Look very spooky in the dim light.
(Hide face behind hands)

The first one played with an old black cat,
(Hold up one finger)

The second one was very short and fat,
(Hold up second finger)

The third one had a wart on his nose,
(Third finger)

The fourth one walked on his tip-toes,
(Fourth finger)

The fifth one sang an eery song,
(Fifth finger)

Five little witches out all night long.

THE PUMPKIN PIE

A round pumpkin pie
(Make circle with arms)

Sits high on the shelf.
(Point up)

I could eat it all

Just by myself.
(Point to self)

THANKSGIVING

Here's the home that I'm thankful for,
(Hold hands up, fingers pointing up, touching)

Here's the wide and open door.
(Spread hands to make doorway)

Here's the table where I eat,
(Make table both hands flat, palms down)

There's the chair that is my seat.
(Make circles with hands)

Here's my plate, round and flat,
(Make circle with hands)

Here's the turkey, big and fat.

Here's the pie to end the meal,

Oh, how good we all will feel.
(Rub tummy)

When we eat all this good food,

I'll watch my manners and not be rude.
(Fold hands)

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

The Christmas tree is tall and bright,
(Arms extended over head, hands touching)

With big, round balls that shine in the light.
(Thumbs, fingers touching forming ball)

And a big star way up on the top
(Point straight up)

Now Santa's sleigh will know where to stop.
(Sweeping motion with hands, coming to stop)

FIVE PRESENTS

Five Christmas presents under the tree,
How I hope they are all for me.
One is a ball, round and red,
Two is a blanket for my bed,
Three is a sled for a ride on the snow,
Four is a game that will be fun, I know,
Five is a box with a funny sound.
What is inside could be fat and round.
Five Christmas presents under the tree,
How I hope they are all for me.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS TREE

Here's the children's Christmas tree,
Standing straight and tall.
(Make triangle with thumbs and fingers)

Here's the pot to put it in
So it will not fall.
(Cup hands together)

Here are two balls bright and gay,
(Make O's with thumb and index finger of each hand)

One ball--two balls--see?
(Hold up to see)

And two tall candles red!
(Hold index fingers up straight for candles)

To trim our Christmas tree.
(Repeat triangle for tree)

OUR SNOWMAN

Here is a snowman, what a sight;

Made of snow, all fat and white.
(Make circle of arms in front of body)

He has a mouth, two eyes, and a nose,
(Touch mouth, eyes, nose)

We made him all, from head to toes.
(Touch head, point to toes)

FOR THE WINTER

To their hives for the winter
(Make a fist with the left hand)
The bumble bees crawl.
(Creep finger of right hand into "hive")

And into their hill
(Make hill on floor with left hand)
March the ants one and all.
(March right fingers into the "hill")

The brown caterpillars
(Put right forefinger in left palm)
Have hidden their heads.
(Curl left fingers around "caterpillar")
And spin some cocoons
(Winding motion around closed hand)
For their snug little beds.
(Continue winding motion)

The squirrels have gone
(Scamper right hand)
To their holes in the trees.
(Tuck right hand under left arm)

Most birds nests are empty
(Cup hands like nest)
Few birds do we see.
(Shake head "no")
The birds have flown south
(Flap arms like wings)
For the winter, I know.
(Point to self)

TEN LITTLE SNOWMEN

Ten little snowmen in a line;
(Hold up ten fingers - lower one finger at a time until one remains)
One of them melted, then there were nine.

Nine little snowmen standing tall and straight;
One of them melted, then there were eight.

Eight little snowmen, white as clouds in heaven;
One of them melted, then there were seven.

Seven little snowmen with arms made of sticks;
One of them melted, then there were six.

Six little snowmen, looking so alive;
One of them melted, then there were five.

Five little snowmen, once there were more;
One of them melted, then there were four.

Four little snowmen, standing under a tree;
Once of them melted, then there were three.

Three little snowmen, under skies so blue;
One of them melted, then there were two.

Two little snowmen, under the sun;
One of them melted, then there was one.

One little snowman, with a brave smile;
Wanting to stay and play for awhile.

MITTENS

Slide your finger into the wide part,
(Slide right hand forward)
Make your thumb stand alone and tall.
(Palm and fingers together, thumb apart)

When you put your mittens on,
(Slide left hand over grouped fingers and then over thumb)
You can't feel cold at all.

FIVE LITTLE VALENTINES

Five little valentines saw candy on the table,
The first one said, "I'll get it, if I'm able."
The second one said, "I'll bet it is sweet."
The third one said, "It will be a treat."
The fourth one said, "It will make you fat."
The fifth one said, "Then leave it where it's at!"

OUR VALENTINE

This little valentine is happy and gay,
(Draw a heart with index fingers)
He'll have a party on Valentine's Day.

He'll dress up in a big red hat,
(Hands over head, finger tips touching)
Now won't all the children just love that?

FIVE LITTLE SOLDIERS

Five little soldiers, standing in a row.
(Hold up fingers of one hand)

Three stood straight, two stood so.
(Bend over last two fingers)

Along came the sargeant
(March up with opposite hand)

And then what happened?

Those two little soldiers

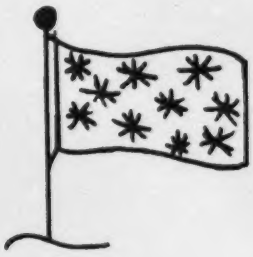
Jumped up!
(Fingers erect)

Quick as a wink.

FIVE FLAGS

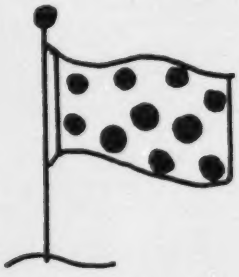
One flag, two flags, three flags, dear
Four flags, five flags, they are all here.
They are the prettiest flags waving high,
One, two, three, four, five flags in the sky.

HINGES



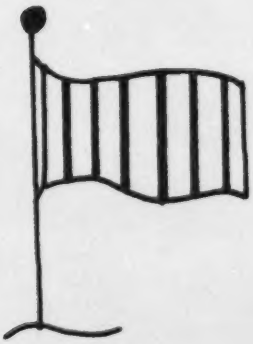
I'm all made of hinges and everything bends,
From the top of my head way down to the ends.
I'm hinges in front, I'm hinges in back;
And if I weren't hinges,
I surely would crack!
(Suit actions to words)

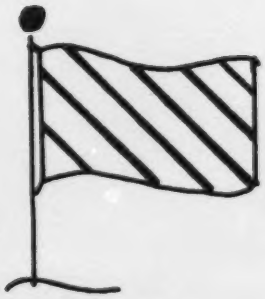
BABY SEEDS



In a milkweed cradle, snug and warm,
(Close fingers into fist)
Baby seeds are hiding safe from harm.

Open wide the cradle, hold it high,
(Open hand and hold it up in the air)
Come along wind, help them fly.
(Wiggle fingers)





THERE WAS A LITTLE TURTLE by Rachel Lindsay

There was a little turtle
(Make a small circle with hands)
He lived in a box,
(Make a box with both hands)
He swam in a puddle,
(Wiggle hand)
He climbed on the rocks.
(Climb finger of one hand over the other)

He snapped at a mosquito,
(Clap index and middle finger with thumb)
He snapped at a flea,
(Clap index and middle finger with thumb)
He snapped at a minnow,
(Clap index and middle finger with thumb)
He snapped at me.
(Clap index and middle finger with thumb)

He caught the mosquito,
(Hold hands up, palms facing forward; quickly bend fingers shut)
He caught the flea,
(Same action)
He caught the minnow,
(Same action)
But he didn't catch me.
(Bend fingers only half way shut)

THE LITTLE CLOWN

This little clown is fat and gay;
(Hold up thumb)
This little clown does tricks all day.
(Hold up pointer finger)
This little clown is tall and strong,
(Hold up middle finger)
This little clown sings a funny song.
(Hold up ring finger and wiggle it)
This little clown is wee and small;
(Hold up little finger)
But he can do anything at all!!!

LION HUNT

I'm going on a lion hunt	
and I'm not afraid,	(Slap knees alternately)
Cause I've got my gun	(Make gun out of fingers)
and a holster by my side.	(Slap side)
I see a big tall tree.	
You can't go over it.	(Gesture over with one hand)
You can't go under it.	(Gesture under with one hand)
Guess we'll have to climb it.	(Make climbing motion)
I'm going on a lion hunt	
and I'm not afraid,	(Slap knees alternately)
Cause I've got my gun	(Make gun out of fingers)
and a holster by my side.	(Slap side)
I see a big wide river.	
You can't go over it.	(Gesture over with one hand)
You can't go under it.	(Gesture under with one hand)
Guess we'll have to swim it.	(Make swimming motion)
I'm going on a lion hunt	
and I'm not afraid,	(Slap knees alternately)
Cause I've got my gun	(Make gun out of fingers)
and a holster by my side.	(Slap side)
I see a big dark cave.	
You can't go over it.	(Gesture over with one hand)
You can't go under it.	(Gesture under with one hand)
Guess we'll have to go in it.	(Gesture in)
IT'S A LION!	
Run. . .	(Slap knees fast)
Swim the river	(Swimming motion)
Climb the tree	(Climbing motion)
Run. . .	(Slap knees fast)
The lion's got you!	(Catch a child)

ROLY-POLY CATERPILLAR

Roly-poly caterpillar
(Walk finger across left palm)
Into a corner crept,
(Fold up fingers of left hand over "caterpillar")
Spun around himself a blanket,
(Make winding motion around hand)
Then for a long time slept.
(Pretend to sleep; close eyes)

Roly-poly caterpillar wakening by and by,
(Prented to awaken; open eyes)
Found himself with beautiful wings
(Put thumbs together; flutter fingers like wings)
Changed to a butterfly.
(Fly the butterfly away)

MANAGING SCISSORS

The ability to use scissors involves the eye-hand coordination needed in developing prewriting skills. Children often have difficulty in acquiring cutting skills if they have not had an opportunity to develop their fine motor skills or to use scissors before entering school.

Before introducing the child to scissors and cutting, the pincer grasp of thumb and index finger should be well developed. Without control of this movement, the child will be frustrated when attempting to use scissors.

Place the scissors in the child's preferred hand, showing him how to place his thumb through one hole, his middle finger through the other hole and to use his index finger as a guide. Show him how to hold the paper with his other hand and encourage him to make snips into the edge of the paper. Use encouraging words of praise along with "open them, shut them" as the child cuts. When this is mastered, the child can be shown how to turn the paper to change direction of the scissors.

If the child has great difficulty mastering this, four hole training scissors may be used. These scissors have separate holes for the child and the teacher, enabling the teacher to demonstrate the cutting action for the child. Once the child has the idea of cutting, transfer him to primary scissors.

Cutting Activities:

1. Snip the edge of paper making a row of fringe.
2. Cut across inch wide strips of paper followed by cutting across two and four inch strips. Mark places to cut with a wide felt tipped pen and gradually reduce the width of the cutting line as the child's skill in manipulating the scissors increases.
3. Cut out shaded areas. Mark each corner in a contrasting color and show the child how to turn a square corner when cutting.
4. Cut out shaded triangles. Mark the corners as the squares were marked.
5. Cut out shaded wide line circles, then reduce the width of the cutting line.

6. Draw easy-to-follow shapes with felt tipped pens for the children to cut out.
7. Have the child practice by cutting out magazine pictures.

USING WRITING TOOLS

Scribbling is as important to the development of writing skills as babbling is to talking. The child needs practice, practice and more practice.

Any activity that uses paper, crayons or any writing tool helps prepare children for future writing experiences. Exercises that incorporate the strokes used in writing are of the most value. Using writing tools involves eye-hand coordination and all the perceptual ability the child has developed. Many preschool children may require a good deal of help in this area.

Introduce the child to his writing experience by having him mark on brown paper or on a half sheet of newsprint. Give him a crayon and ask him to "scribble". If the child is reluctant, demonstrate the activity for him. Put the crayon in his hand and help him scribble. Large, free movement should be encouraged. Continue to help the child until he marks by himself. He may need assistance in picking up the crayon and holding it properly for some time.

Offer the child different colored crayons once he learns to mark independently. Continue the activity only as long as the child shows interest. Display his work in a prominent place after his name has been printed on it.

A variety of markers and paper can be used:

- pencils
- felt-tip pens
- colored pencils
- crayons
- colored chalk
- opened paper bags
- newspapers
- wrapping paper
- typing paper
- chalkboard
- construction paper

The pleasure and satisfaction of using crayons is more important than the way a child uses them. Always make favorable, positive comments about the drawings children make, saying "I like the way you color." Also ask the children to comment on their individual pictures, encouraging them to tell a story about each drawing.

After the child feels comfortable holding a crayon or pencil, careful analysis of the marks and scribbles he makes on paper will indicate whether or not he scribbles freely or confines his markings to a

single pattern. If he makes only vertical, horizontal, diagonal or circular marks, encourage him to make marks in other directions. It may be discovered that he is capable of making marks in only one direction and remediation techniques will be necessary. Tools for making strokes should then be employed along with additional readiness activities.

Tools for learning to make strokes include:

- clay
- yarn
- crayons
- cloth strips
- white glue
- sand paper
- popsicle sticks
- paint
- pipe cleaners
- construction paper strips
- felt-tip pens
- chalk
- crepe paper

Observe the children carefully as they mark on paper and notice whether or not they track the hand movement with their eyes. The coordination of eye-hand movement is vital to writing skills. If eye-hand movements are not coordinated, a child will not be able to guide his hand movements for activities requiring some precision.

Marking on paper in time to music is an enjoyable experience for children. First play a record with music that has a slow tempo and mark in time to it. Follow this with a record that has a fast tempo. Compare the way each child marks under these two conditions. There should be considerably more marks made to a record with a fast tempo. Speed in marking is not significant when observed in an isolated setting; however, it does give an indication of the degree of motor control.

SEQUENTIAL MARKING ACTIVITIES FOR HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL STROKES

Use consistent language when talking to children about the basic strokes. Refer to a horizontal stroke as "across", and a vertical stroke as "down".

Make a vertical path four inches wide with a felt tipped pen on newspaper. Draw a car at the top of the path and a garage at the bottom. Have the child push a toy car along the path to the garage. A green dot can indicate the starting point and a red dot the stopping point.

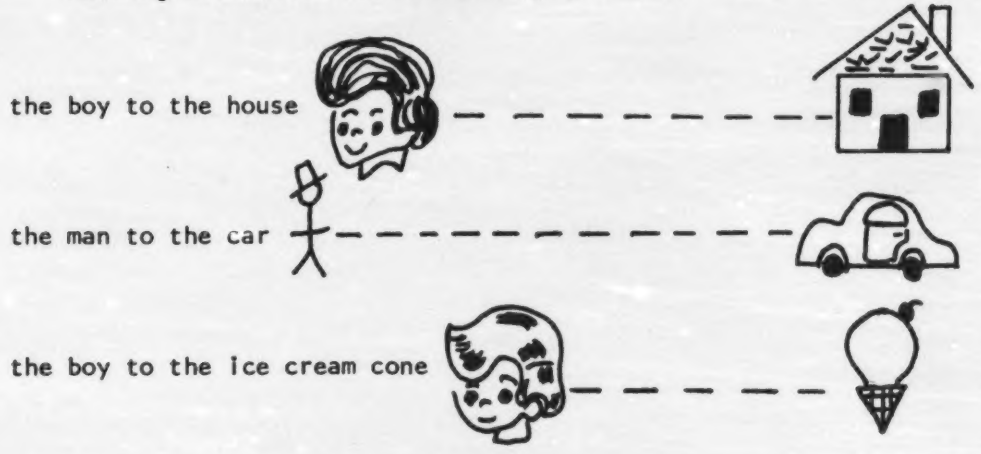
Make a second path two inches wide with a felt tipped pen on newspaper. Draw a stick boy at the top of the paper and an ice cream cone at the other end. Push a toy car down the narrower path. Decrease the width of the path as the child is able to stay within the borderlines.

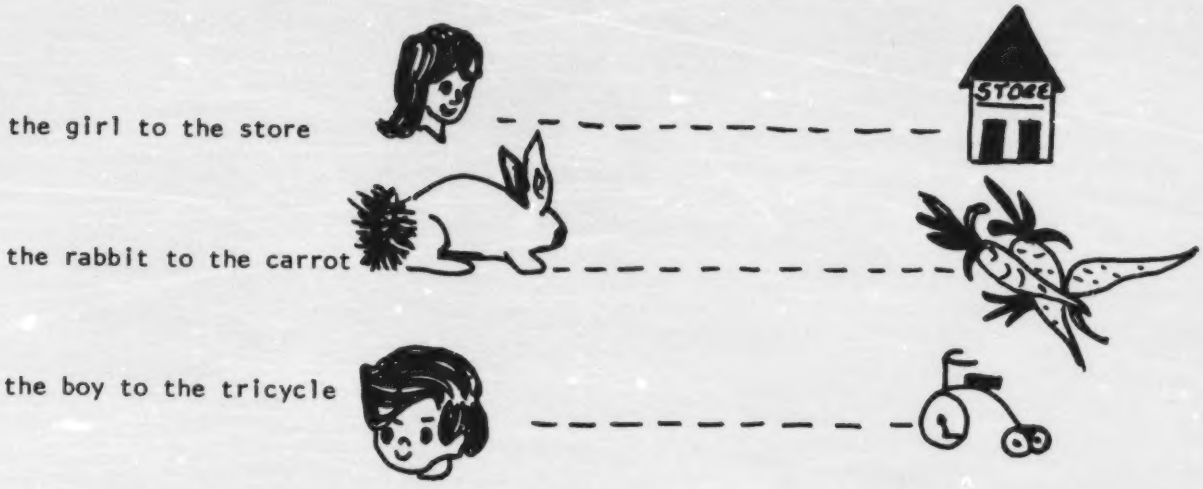
Draw a single vertical line on the chalkboard with white chalk. Have the children trace over the line with colored chalk.

After the children have learned vertical lines and the concept of "down", repeat the process with horizontal lines teaching the concept of "across".

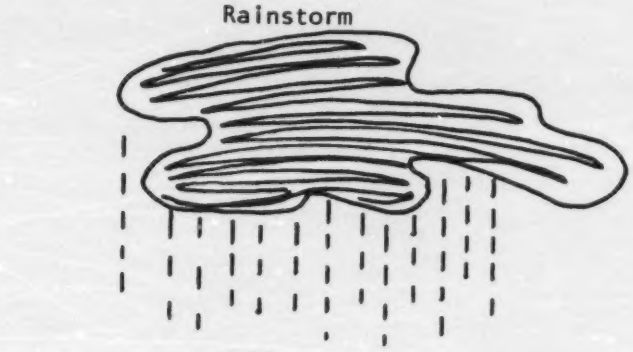
Only after the children can follow paths made on newspaper and the chalkboard are they ready to go to activities on eight by eleven inch paper. Primary paper and primary pencils should be used for drawing lines. The starting point can be indicated with a green dot and the stopping point with a red dot. Tape the paper to the table if needed.

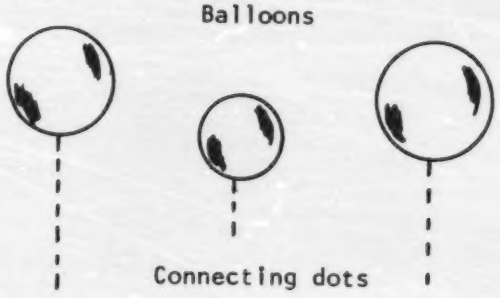
Marking activities include making horizontal lines from:





Marking activities for making vertical lines include:





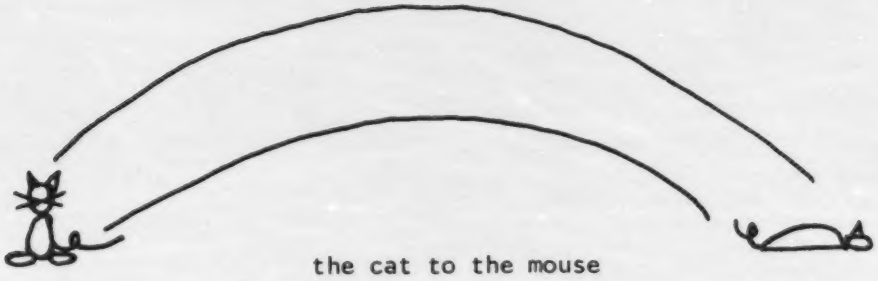
SEQUENTIAL ACTIVITIES FOR MAKING CIRCULAR STROKES

Continue the use of consistent language when talking to the children about their marks. Introduce the words "curve left, curve right" or "circle left, circle right" when asking the child to do a circular stroke.

Make curved paths, four inches wide, with a felt tipped pen on newspaper with simple objects at each end of the path. Ask the children to push toy cars on the curved paths always moving from the top of the paper to the bottom. Continue this procedure using narrower curved paths in the same manner as the horizontal and vertical path activities.

Trace the path from:

the girl to the school
the man to the car
the girl to the lollipop
the dog to the bone



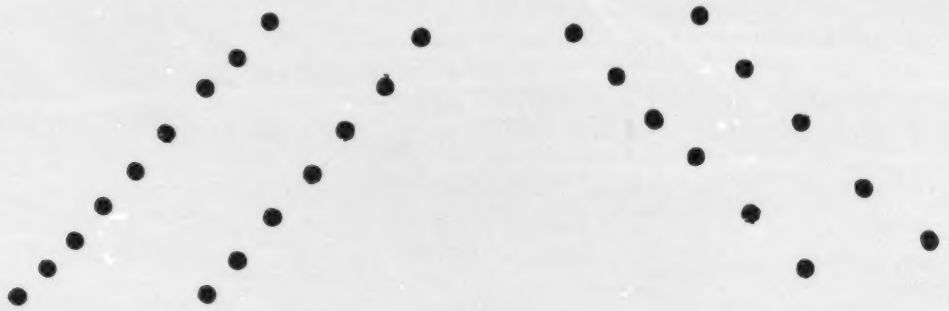
the cat to the mouse

Connect the dots:

SEQUENTIAL ACTIVITIES FOR MAKING SLANT LINES

After learning to make horizontal, vertical lines and curved lines, introduce slant lines and use the words "slant, slant left, slant right", when making diagonal lines.

To introduce slant lines, the children can connect-the-dots:

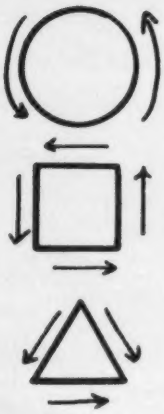


Use templates for shape tracing, making sure the children trace in the proper direction:

STEP I Circles

STEP II Squares

STEP III Triangles



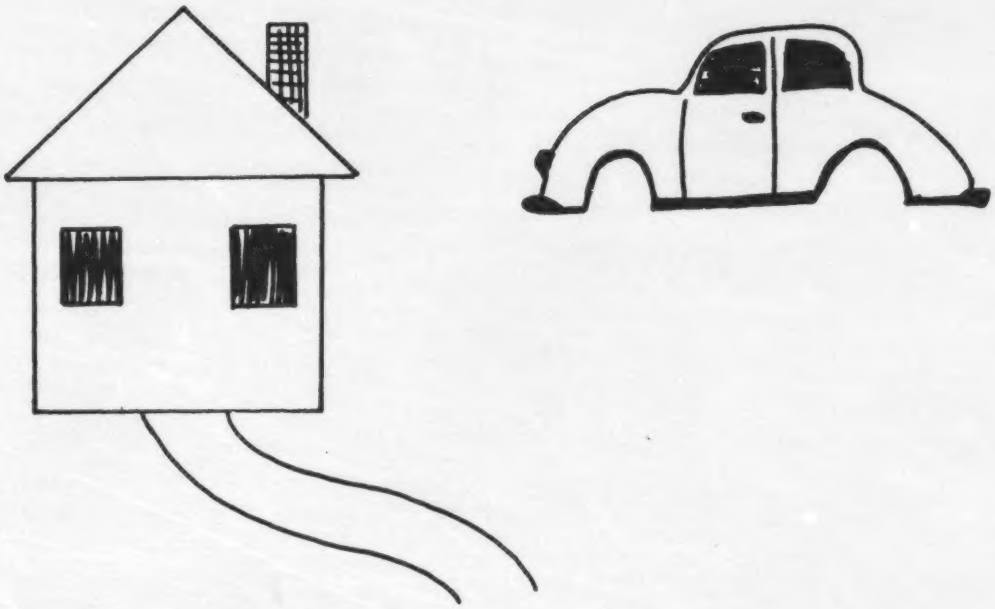
When the child has learned to make straight, curved and slant lines, he is ready to copy a variety of geometric shapes and designs and other pictures.

TRACING

Provide master copies made with broad felt tipped pens of simple designs such as balls, fruit, plants, or animals. Have the children trace these designs on plain white, light-weight paper.

MISSING PARTS

Simple outline drawings of a house with a missing door, a face with no mouth, a car with no wheels or animals with no ears can be given to the children and they can draw in the missing parts.



PRINTING AN INITIAL

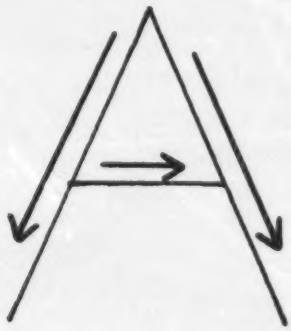
The six basic writing strokes are always referred to as follows:

down
across
slant right
slant left
circle right
circle left

From these basic strokes children can be taught to write any letter of the alphabet in capitals. Always begin the stroke at the top and come down.

When the children can make these strokes, can copy shapes, can cut with some degree of control and can distinguish their name from others, they are ready to utilize the writing readiness skills they have acquired. Learning to make the first letter of their name is a proud achievement.

A word of caution: It is not the responsibility of preschool teachers to teach children to print their initial or name, only to provide readiness activities. Do not teach children to print their full name without consulting the school where the children will be enrolled. These teachers usually have strong preference for teaching the children in either upper or lower case letters.



A	A slant left, slant right, across
B	B down, circle right, circle right again
C	C circle left
D	D down, circle right
E	E down, across, across, across
F	F down, across, across
G	G circle left, up a little, across a little
H	H down, down, across
I	I down
J	J down, give it a little curl, across
K	K down, slant left, slant right
L	L down, across
M	M down, slant right, slant left, down
N	N down, slant right, down
O	O circle left and close it
P	P down, circle right
Q	Q circle left and close it, slant right
R	R down, circle right, slant right

S	circle left and then circle right
T	down, across
U	down, around and back up
V	slant right, slant left
W	slant right, slant left, slant right, slant left
X	slant right, slant left
Y	slant right, slant left, down
Z	across, slant left, across

SPECIAL HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE HANDICAPPED

Chubby crayons are easier to hold and can be made by melting the stubs of one color of crayon and pouring the melted wax into a plastic pill bottle. After the wax has set, dip the bottle in hot water to loosen the crayon.

Cone crayons offer lots of versatility. Melt the stubs of one color of crayon and pour the wax into a cone shaped paper container (the type used to serve soft drinks in plastic holders). When the wax is set, peel off the paper. The base of the cone may be more easily handled by a cerebral palsied child. The child can also make broad sweeps of color on the paper with the side of the cone.

Hand splint crayon holders may aid the child with little finger control. Hand splints can be homemade from plastic splinting materials or plastic containers. Occupational therapists can help in the construction of these materials adapted to the specific needs of a certain child.

Some children find it easier to control a pencil which has been inserted in a rubber ball or to use crayons in a special crayon holder. A number of other adaptations are described in the Manual of Cerebral Palsy Equipment: Help Us Help Ourselves and Self-Help Devices available from the National Society for Crippled Children and Adults, Inc., 11 South LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Taping paper to the desk may make drawing and writing easier for children with limited control of their hands or the use of only one hand.

REFERENCE MATERIALS FOR MORE IDEAS

Frost, Marie. Fun with Action Rhymes.

Grayson, Marion F. Let's Do Finger Plays. New York: McKay David Co., Inc.

Hall, Adelaide. Fingerplays. New York: Golden Press.

Horn, George F. The Crayon. Worcester, Mass.: Davis Publications, Inc., 1969.

This is one of those "icing on the cake" books. It is a beautiful book devoted to use of the crayon by young children through the intermediate grades. Many new ideas which could be adapted for other children are included.

Scott, Louise Binder and J.J. Thompson. Rhymes for Fingers and Flannelboards. New York: Webster Division, McGraw Hill Book Company.

Smiley, Palma and Alma Gilleo. Teaching with Rhythmic Activities. Elgin, Illinois: David C. Cook Publishing Company.